THE LIGHT IN THE CLEARING

A TALE OF THE NORTH COUNTRY IN THE TIME OF SILAS WRIGHT

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Barton Baynes, orphan, is taken to live with his uncle, Peabody Baynes, and his Aunt Deel on a farm on Rattlerod in a neighborhood called Lickitysplit, about the year 1826. Barton meets Sally Dunkelberg, about his own age, but socially of a class above the Bayneses, and is fascinated by the pretty face and fine clothes.

CHAPTER II—Barton meets Roving Kate, known in the neighborhood as the "Silent Woman." Amos Grimshaw, young son of the richest man in the township, is a visitor at the Baynes home, and Roving Kate tells the fortunes of the two boys, predicting a bright future for Barton and death on the gallows for Amos. Reproved for an act of boyish mischief Barton runs away, intending to make his home with the Dunkelbergs. He reaches the village of Canton and falls into a sleep of exhaustion on a porch. There he is found by Silas Wright, Jr., prominent man in public affairs, who, knowing Peabody Baynes, takes Barton home after buying him new clothes.

CHAPTER III—Barton and his uncle and aunt visit Canton and hear Silas Wright read a sermon.

CHAPTER IV—Silas Wright evinces much interest in Barton, and sends a box of books and magazines to the Baynes home. The election of Silas Wright to the United States senate is announced.

CHAPTER V—When Barton is twelve years old he becomes aware of the existence of a wonderful and mysterious power known as "Money," and learns how, through his possession of that wonderful thing Grimshaw is the most powerful and greatly dreaded man in the community, most of the settlers being in his debt. After a visit to the Baynes home Mr. Wright leaves a note in a sealed envelope, which Barton is to read on the first night when he leaves home to attend school.

CHAPTER VI—Barton is asked to drive a load to mill, arrives safely, but in a snowstorm, unable to see the road, the horses get into the ditch and a wheel of the wagon is broken. Uncle Peabody manages to get together enough to satisfy Grimshaw and obtain an extension.

CHAPTER VII—Now in his sixteenth year Barton accompanies "Mr. Purvis," the hired man, to the postoffice at Canton. On the way they meet a rider, and the three journey together. They are held up by a man with a gun, who makes the highwayman's demand of "Your money or your life." Purvis runs away, while the stranger draws a pistol, but before he can use it the robber shoots and kills him. Barton's horse throws him and runs away. As the murderer bends over the stranger Barton throws a stone which he observes wounds the thief, who makes off at once, but not until Barton had noted that his gun stock was broken in a peculiar manner. Search of the neighborhood for the robber is unavailing and the stranger is buried.

CHAPTER VIII—Barton leaves home to attend Michael Hacket's school. Amos Grimshaw is arrested charged with the murder of the stranger.

Aunt Deel gave a gasp and quickly covered her mouth with her hand. Uncle Peabody changed color as he rose from his chair with a strange look on his face. He swung his big right hand in the air as he said:

"By the eternal jumpin'—"

He stopped, pulled down the left sleeve of his flannel shirt and walked to the water pail and drank out of the dipper.

"Say, Mr. Grimshaw, I'm awful sorry for ye," said my uncle as he returned to his chair, "but I've always learnt this boy to tell the truth an' the hull truth. I know the danger I'm in. We're gettin' old. It'll be hard to start over ag'in an' you can ruin us if ye want to an' I'm as scared o' ye as a mouse in a cat's paw, but this boy has got to tell the truth right out plain. I couldn't muzzle him if I tried—he's too much of a man. If you're scared o' the truth you mus' know that Amos is guilty."

Mr. Grimshaw shook his head with anger and beat the floor with the end of his cane.

"Nobody knows anything o' the kind, Baynes," said Mr. Dunkelberg. "Of course Amos never thought o' killing anybody. He's a harmless kind of a boy. I know him well and so do you. Under the circumstances Mr. Grimshaw is afraid that Bart's story will make it difficult for Amos to prove his innocence."

Uncle Peabody shook his head with a look of firmness.

Again Grimshaw laughed between his teeth as he looked at my uncle. In his view every man had his price.

"I see that I'm the mouse an' you're the cat," he resumed, as that curious laugh rattled in his throat. "Look a' here, Baynes, I'll tell ye what I'll do. I'll cancel the hull mortgage."

Again Uncle Peabody rose from his chair with a look in his face which I have never forgotten. How his voice rang out!

"No, sir!" he shouted so loudly that we all jumped to our feet and Aunt Deel covered her face with her apron and began to cry. It was like the explosion of a blast. Then the fragments began falling with a loud crash:

"NO, SIR! YE CAN'T BUY THE NAIL ON MY LITTLE FINGER OR HIS WITH ALL YER MONEY—D——N YOU!"

It was like the shout of Israel from the top of the mountains. Shep bounced into the house with hair on end and the chickens cackled and the old rooster clapped his wings and crowed with all the power of his lungs. Every member of that little group stood stock still and breathless.

"No, Sir! Ye Can't Buy the Nail on My Little Finger or His With All Yer Money—Damn You!"

I trembled with a fear I could not have defined. Mr. Grimshaw shuffled out of the door, his cane rapping the floor as if his arm had been stricken with palsy in a moment.

Mr. Dunkelberg turned to my aunt, his face scarlet, and muttered an apology for the disturbance and followed the money lender.

"Come on, Bart," Uncle Peabody called cheerfully, as he walked toward the barnyard. "Let's go an' git in them but'nuts."

He paid no attention to our visitors—neither did my aunt, who followed us. The two men talked together a moment, unhitched their horses, got into their buggies and drove away.

"Wal, I'm surprised at Mr. Horace Dunkelberg tryin' to come it over us like that—ayes! I be," said Aunt Deel.

"Wal, I ain't," said Uncle Peabody. "Ol' Grimshaw has got him under his thumb—that's what's the matter. You'll find he's up to his ears in debt to Grimshaw—prob'ly."

As we followed him toward the house, he pushing the wheelbarrow loaded with sacks of nuts, he added:

"At last Grimshaw has found somethin' that he can't buy an' he's awful surprised. Too bad he didn't learn that lesson long ago."

He stopped his wheelbarrow by the steps and we sat down together on the edge of the stoop as he added:

"I got mad—they kep' pickin' on me so—I'm sorry, but I couldn't help it. We'll start up ag'in somewheres if we have to. There's a good many days' work in me yet."

As we carried the bags to the attic room I thought of the lodestone and the compass and knew that Mr. Wright had foreseen what was likely to happen.

When we came down Uncle Peabody said to me:

"I feel sorry, awful sorry, for that boy."

We spent a silent afternoon gathering apples. After supper we played old sledge and my uncle had hard work to keep us in good countenance. We went to bed early and I lay long, hearing the autumn wind in the popple leaves and thinking of that great thing which had grown strong within us, little by little, in the candle light.

CHAPTER X.

A Party and—My Fourth Peril?

It was a rainy Sunday. In the middle of the afternoon Uncle Peabody and I had set out in our spring buggy with the family umbrella—a faded but sacred implement, always carefully dried, after using, and hung in the clothes press. We were drenched to the skin in spite of the umbrella. It was still raining when we arrived at the familiar door in Ashery lane. Uncle Peabody wouldn't stop.

He hurried away. We pioneers rarely stopped or even turned out for the weather.

"Come in," said the voice of the schoolmaster at the door. "There's good weather under this roof."

He saw my plight as I entered.

"I'm like a shaggy dog that's been in swimming," I said.

"Upon my word, boy, we're in luck," remarked the schoolmaster.

I looked up at him.

"Michael Henry's clothes!—sure, they're just the thing for you!"

I followed him upstairs, wondering how it had happened that Michael Henry had clothes.

He took me into his room and brought some handsome, soft clothes out of a press with shirt, socks and boots to match.

"There, my laddie buck," said he, "put them on."

"These will soon dry on me," I said.

"Put them on—ye laggard! Michael Henry told me to give them to you. It's the birthday night o' little Ruth, my boy. There's a big cake with candles and chicken pie and jellied cookies and all the like o' that. Put them on. A wet boy at the feast would dampen the whole proceedings."

I put them on and with a great sense of relief and comfort. They were an admirable fit—too perfect for an accident, although at the time I thought only of their grandeur as I stood surveying myself in the looking-glass. They were of blue cloth and I saw that they went well with my blond hair and light skin. I was putting on my collar and necktie when Mr. Hacket returned.

We went below and the table was very grand with its great frosted cake and its candles, in shiny brass sticks, and its jellies and preserves with the gleam of polished pewter among them. Mrs. Hacket and all the children, save Ruth, were waiting for us in the dining room.

"Now sit down here, all o' ye, with Michael Henry," said the schoolmaster. "The little lady will be impatient. I'll go and get her and God help us to make her remember the day."

He was gone a moment, only, when he came back with Ruth in lovely white dress and slippers and gay with ribbons, and the silver beads of Mary on her neck. We clapped our hands and cheered and, in the excitement of the moment, John tipped over his drinking glass and shattered it on the floor.

"Never mind, my brave lad—no glass ever perished in a better cause. God bless you!"

We ate and jested and talked, and the sound of our laughter drowned the cry of the wind in the chimney and the drumming of the rain upon the windows.

Next morning my clothes, which had been hung by the kitchen stove, were damp and wrinkled. Mr. Hacket came to my room before I had risen.

"Michael Henry would rather see his clothes hanging on a good boy than on a nail in the closet," said he. "Sure they give no comfort to the nail at all."

"I guess mine are dry now," I answered.

"They're wet and heavy, boy. No son o' Baldur could keep a light heart in them. Sure ye'd be as much out o' place as a sunbeam in a cave o' bats. If ye care not for your own comfort think o' the poor lad in the green chair. He's that proud and pleased to see them on ye it would be a shame to reject his offer. Sure, if they were dry yer own garments would be good enough, God knows, but Michael Henry loves the look o' ye in these togs, and then the president is in town."

That evening he discovered a big stain, black as ink, on my coat and trousers. Mr. Hacket expressed the opinion that it might have come from the umbrella, but I am quite sure that he had spotted them to save me from the last homemade suit I ever wore, save in rough work, and keep Michael Henry's on my back. In any event I wore them no more save at chore time.

Sally came and went, with the Wills boy, and gave no heed to me. In her eyes I had no more substance than a ghost, it seemed to me, although I caught her, often, looking at me. I judged that her father had given her a bad report of us and had some regrets, in spite of my knowledge that we were right, although they related mostly to Amos.

Next afternoon I saw Mr. Wright and the president walking back and forth on the bridge as they talked together. A number of men stood in front of the blacksmith shop, by the river shore, watching them, as I passed, on my way to the mill on an errand. The two statesmen were in broadcloth and white linen and beaver hats. They stopped as I approached them.

"Well, partner, we shall be leaving in an hour or so," said Mr. Wright as he gave me his hand. "You may look for me here soon after the close of the session. Take care of yourself and go often to see Mrs. Wright and obey your captain and remember me to your aunt and uncle."

"See that you keep coming, my good boy," said the president as he gave me his hand, with playful reference, no doubt, to Mr. Wright's remark that I was a coming man.

"Bart, I've some wheat to be thrashed in the barn on the back lot," said the senator as I was leaving them. "You can do it Saturdays, if you care to, at a shilling an hour. Stack the straw out of doors until you've finished, then put it back in the bay. Winnow the wheat carefully and sack it and bring it down to the granary and I'll settle with you when I return."

I remember that a number of men who worked in Grimshaw's sawmill were passing as he spoke.

"Yes, sir," I answered, much elated by the prospect of earning money.

The examination of Amos was set down for Monday and the people of the village were stirred and shaken by wildest rumors regarding the evidence to be adduced. Every day men and women stopped me in the street to ask what I knew of the murder. I followed the advice of Bishop Perkins and kept my knowledge to myself.

Saturday came, and when the chores were done I went alone to the grain barn in the back lot of the senator's farm with flail and measure and broom and fork and shovel and sacks and my luncheon, in a pushcart, with all of which Mrs. Wright had provided me.

It was a lonely place with woods on three sides of the field and a road on the other. I kept laying down beds of wheat on the barn floor and beating them out with the flail until the sun was well over the roof, when I sat down to eat my luncheon. Then I swept up the grain and winnowed out the chaff and filled one of my sacks. That done, I covered the floor again and the thump of the flail eased my loneliness until in the middle of the afternoon two of my schoolmates came and asked me to go swimming with them. The river was not forty rods away and a good trail led to the swimming hole. It was a warm, bright day and I was hot and thirsty. The thought of cool waters and friendly companionship was too much for me. I went with them and stayed with them longer than I intended. I remember saying as I dressed that I should have to work late and go without my supper in order to finish my stint.

It was almost dark when I was putting the last sack of wheat into my cart, in the gloomy barn and getting ready to go.

A rustling in the straw where I stood stopped me suddenly. I heard stealthy footsteps in the darkness. I stood my ground and demanded:

"Who's there?"

I saw a form approaching in the gloom with feet as noiseless as a cat's. I took a step backward and, seeing that it was a woman, stopped.

"It's Kate," came in a hoarse whisper as I recognized her form and staff.

"Run, boy—they have just come out o' the woods. I saw them. They will take you away. Run."

She had picked up the flail, and now she put it in my hands and gave me a push toward the door. I ran, and none too quickly, for I had not gone fifty feet from the barn in the stubble when I heard them coming after me, whoever they were. I saw that they were gaining and turned quickly. I

I Had Time to Raise My Flail and Bring It Down Upon the Head of the Leader.

had time to raise my flail and bring it down upon the head of the leader, who fell as I had seen a beef fall under the ax. Another man stopped beyond the reach of my flail and, after a second's hesitation, turned and ran away in the darkness.

I could hear or see no other motion in the field. I turned and ran on down the slope toward the village. In a moment I saw someone coming out of the maple grove at the field's end, just ahead, with a lantern.

Then I heard the voice of the schoolmaster saying:

"Is it you, my lad?"

"Yes," I answered, as I came up to him and Mary, in a condition of breathless excitement.

I told them of the curious adventure I had had.

"Come quick," said the schoolmaster. "Let's go back and find the man in the stubble."

I remembered that I had struck the path in my flight just before stopping to swing the flail. The man must have fallen very near it. Soon we found where he had been lying and drops of fresh blood on the stubble.

"Hush," said the schoolmaster.

We listened and heard a wagon rattling at a wild pace down the road toward the river.

"There he goes," said Mr. Hacket. "His companions have carried him away. Ye'd be riding in that wagon now, yerself, my brave lad, if ye hadn't 'a' made a lucky hit with the flail—God bless ye!"

"What would they 'a' done with me?" I asked.

"Oh, I reckon they'd 'a' took ye off, lad, and kep' ye for a year or so until Amos was out o' danger," said Mr. Hacket. "Maybe they'd drowned ye in the river down there an' left yer clothes on the bank to make it look like an honest drowning. The devil knows what they'd 'a' done with ye, laddie buck. We'll have to keep an eye on ye now, every day until the trial is over—sure we will. Come, we'll go up to the barn and see if Kate is there."

Just then we heard the receding wagon go roaring over the bridge on Little river. Mary shuddered with fright. The schoolmaster reassured us by saying:

"Don't be afraid. I brought my gun in case we'd meet a painter. But the danger is past."

He drew a long pistol from his coat pocket and held it in the light of the lantern.

The loaded cart stood in the middle of the barn floor, where I had left it, but old Kate had gone. We closed the barn, drawing the cart along with us. When we came into the edge of the village I began to reflect upon the strange peril out of which I had so luckily escaped. It gave me a heavy sense of responsibility and of the wickedness of men.

I thought of old Kate and her broken silence. For once I had heard her speak. I could feel my flesh tingle when I thought of her quick words and her hoarse, passionate whisper.

I knew, or thought I knew, why she took such care of me. She was in league with the gallows and could not bear to see it cheated of its prey. For some reason she hated the Grimshaws. I had seen the hate in her eyes the day she dogged along behind the old money lender through the streets of the village when her pointing finger had seemed to say to me: "There, there is the man who has brought me to this. He has put these rags upon my back, this fire in my heart, this wild look in my eyes. Wait and you will see what I will put upon him."

(Continued next week.)

Creator of Firebrand Trevison Writes New Serial for This Paper

An un-American orator is knocked off a soap-box, bare knuckles gleam in the light of a rising moon in a little eastern town and then—

CHARLES ALDEN SELTZER

And then you are engrossed in the new serial which this newspaper has obtained from the pen of Charles Alden Seltzer, author of some of the best American novels of the last decade. The new story is "The Man With a Country."

Seltzer does not depend for his setting in this tale upon the expansive plains of the west.

Factory smoke takes the place of alkali dust and the hum of industry supplants the howl of the coyote. But the characters Seltzer depicts are just as truly American as the old favorites, Jefferson Gawne and Firebrand Trevison.

Seltzer's popularity as a writer of American fiction had its inception with the publication of "The Two-Gun Man." It increased rapidly as others of his works were produced—"The Range Riders," "Triangle Cupid," "The Trail to Yesterday," "The Boss of the Lazy Y" and on down to "Firebrand Trevison." Then the list of his admirers was made endless when such motion picture stars as William S. Hart, Tom Mix, Bert Lytell, Jack Gardner and Roy Stewart began purchasing the rights to depict his stories in the films.

Hold fast to that which is good. Don't sell or trade your Liberty Bonds unless imperative necessity requires

MUCH LIKE OLD-WORLD CITY

Capital of State of Washington Has Retained Impression Given It by Its Builders.

Those who had the naming of mountains and cities of the Northwest chose with a lavish hand from the names of gods and goddesses of mythology, and Indian tribes. The Olympic mountains might well have been those from which Jove hurled his thunder. And the sylvan town of Olympia, the capital of the state of Washington, seems more fitting for the temples of Greece than for those of lawmaking of an American state.

With the exception, possibly, of Annapolis, Maryland, no state in the Union has chosen such an old-world-appearing hamlet for its capital, a town almost segregated from the outside world. At the end of a wonderfully beautiful waterway, deep-seated in the hills and forests, Olympia has none of the atmosphere of politics and big business.

The town is a very small one, so small indeed that the average overland train would not even hesitate as it passed through. Its water front until recently, has been adorned with pleasure craft, fishing fleets and cannery boats. The fjords of Puget sound afford unlimited opportunities for fishing and pleasure excursions.

Here loggers and lawmakers have met in the past to solve the mighty problems of legislation and lumbering. Here cannery boats tied up in winter for overhauling. Here in time long past men tramped in from Tacoma and Seattle with supplies which they could not wrest from nature, on their backs.

The town climbs a short distance into the surrounding hills from the water front, and then stops. The state capitol resembles a dignified seat of learning in northern Europe; in fact nearly all Northwest buildings bear the stamp of the home of their builders, the Scandinavians, Scottish and English settlers.

ANTIQUITY OF DECORATIVE ART

Strange Sources From Which Pigments Used by Modern Painters Are Derived.

PRESERVATION OF SURFACES.

Crude but Effective Processes Employed by the Egyptians and Greeks of Pliny's Day—Noah Prudently Waterproofed the Ark.

Whether paint was invented in answer to a need for a preservative or to meet a desire for beauty is a question fully as knotty as the ancient one about the relative time of arrival of the chicken or the egg. It was invented, though, and it serves both purposes equally; so whether it is an offspring of mother necessity or an adopted son of beauty remains forever a disputed question.

The first men, cowering under the fierce and glaring suns of the biblical countries, constructed rude huts of wood to shelter them. The perishable nature of these structures caused rapid decay, and it is probable that the occupants, seeking some artificial means of preservation, hit upon the pigments of the earth in their search. It is perhaps natural to suppose that it was the instinct of preservation that led men to the search, although the glories of the sunsets and the beauties of the rainbow may have created a desire to imitate those wonders in their own dwellings.

The earliest record of the application of a preservative to a wooden structure dates from the ark, which was, according to the Bible, "pitched within and without." The pitch was a triumph of preservation whatever it lacked as a thing of beauty.

Decoration applied to buildings first comes to light with ancient Babylon, whose walls were covered with representations of hunting scenes and of combat. These were done in red and the method followed was to paint the scene on the bricks at the time of manufacture, assuring permanence by baking. Strictly speaking, this was not painting so much as it was the earliest manifestation of our own familiar kalsomining.

The first Hebrew to mention painting is Moses. In the thirty-third chapter of the book of Numbers he instructs the Israelites, "When ye have passed over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then shall ye drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you and destroy all their pictures. . . ."

At later periods the Jews adopted many customs of the peoples who successively obtained power over them and in the apocryphal book of the Maccabees is found this allusion to the art of decorating, "For as the master builder of a new house must care for the whole building, but he that undertaketh to set it out and paint it, must seek out things for the adorning thereof."

Although Homer gives credit to a Greek for the discovery of paint, the allusions to it in the books of Moses, the painted mummy cases of the Egyptians and the decorated walls of Babylon and Thebes fix its origin at a period long antecedent to the Grecian era. The walls of Thebes were painted 1,900 years before the coming of Christ and 900 years before "'Omer smote his bloomin' lyre."

The Greeks recognized the value of paint as a preservative and made use of something akin to it on their ships. Pliny writes of the mode of boiling wax and painting ships with it, after which, he continues, "neither the sea, nor the wind, nor the sun can destroy the wood thus protected."

The Romans, being essentially a warlike people, never brought the decoration of buildings to the high plane it had reached with the Greeks. For all that the ruins of Pompeii show many structures whose mural decorations are in fair shape today. The colors used were glaring. A black background was the usual one and the combinations worked thereon red, yellow and blue.

In the early Christian era the use of mosaics for churches somewhat supplanted mural painting. Still, during the reign of Justinian the Church of Saint Sophia was built at Constantinople and its walls were adorned with paintings.

In modern times the uses of paint have come to be as numerous as its myriad shades and tints. Paint is unique in that its name has no synonym and for it there is no substitute material. Bread is the staff of life, but paint is the life of the staff.

No one thinks of the exterior of a wooden building now except in terms of paint coated. Interiors, too, from painted walls and stained furniture down to the lowliest kitchen utensil, all receive their protective covering. Steel, so often associated with cement re-enforcing, is painted before it goes to give solidity to the manufactured stone. The huge girders of the skyscrapers are daubed an ugly but efficient red underneath the surface coat of black. Perhaps the best example of the value of paint on steel is found in the venerable Brooklyn bridge, on which a gang of painters is kept going continually. It is scarce possible to think of a single manufactured article which does not meet paint somewhere in the course of its construction. So has paint grown into the very marrow of our lives.